

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

St. *MARY*'s CHURCH

JULY 21. 1713.

AT THE

A S S I Z E S

HELD AT

C A M B R I D G E,

Before the Right HONORABLE

The LORD Chief Baron *WARD*,

A N D

Mr. Justice *P O W I S*.

*Publish'd at the Request of Mr. HIGH-SHERIFF,
and the Gentlemen of the GRAND JURY.*

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ST. JOHN'S

CHURCH

ASSISTED

CHARLES R. D. G. H.

THE REV. FATHER WARD

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If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men.

THE Words I have now read making a distinct and entire Sentence of themselves, I need not observe any thing of their Connexion, or Coherence with what goes before, or after.

They are an Exhortation from the Mouth of an Apostle, to live peaceably with all Men, of whatever Nation or Religion, Sect or Profession, Quality or Condition: none are excepted. We are to live peaceably with All, on the Score of Humanity and Christian Charity. But then this is to be so only upon Supposition, that it is possible in the nature of the thing, and also reasonable: That is, that we be not under any either Natural or Moral Incapacity of doing it: for then the Obligation must of Course cease; not wholly and entirely, but in part, for we are still to endeavor to the utmost of our Power to live peaceably. *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men.*

The Subject which this leads me to treat of will not, I hope, be thought Foreign or Unfutable to the Time, the Place, or the Occasion. The Time; when having Peace with our Enemies Abroad, we have need of the strictest Caution to be united in Affections at Home: The Place; the Honour and Prosperity whereof are very nearly concern'd in the Offices of Peace and Love: The Occasion; the Design of which is for the promoting of Peace and Order, for composing Dissentions, and healing of Differences in a Judicial way; that we may the better *live quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty*. I shall therefore, without farther Preface, propose the following Method of Discourse.

I. I shall enquire what Obligations we lie under to Peaceableness with all Men, show whereon they are Founded, and how far they Extend.

II. I shall consider the particular Duties and Offices implied in this Duty of Peaceableness, and therein give General Directions for a peaceable Conduct.

III. and Lastly, I shall apply the general Rules to some special Cases and Instances, particularly to That which the present Occasion offers to us.

First, I am to Enquire what Obligation we lie under to Peaceableness with all Men, to show whereon they are Founded, and how far they Extend.

Our Obligations to this Duty are very great and manifest. They are founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, are in some Sense Antecedent to all Laws Humane and Divine, and are bound upon us by both, because it was reasonable and necessary they should be so. They arise *immediately* from the mutual Relation we bear to each other, and the Capacity we are put into of promoting each others Happiness; and if we run them up to the Fountain and Foundation of all, *God Blessed for Ever*, we shall find that they flow more *remotely* from the unchangeable Perfections of his Nature, from his Wisdom and Goodness. When He was pleas'd to make such a Creature as Man, his Primary End and Design (excepting his own Glory which is coincident with it) was to make Him happy for ever with Himself in Heaven; and his Secondary was to make Him in some measure also Happy here in this State of Probation. All his Laws, Natural and Positive, plainly center in these two, or rather Ultimately terminate in the former. From hence spring all our Obligations to Peace and Amity, in as much as by the very Frame and Constitution of our Nature, and the Circumstances of our Being, they contribute greatly both to our Temporal and Eternal Happiness.

With regard to this Life, it is evident, that, had we no Contests or Quarrels with each other, the World would be a much more comfortable Place to live in, than now we find it: the Earth would be a Paradise compar'd to what it is, and Mankind Happy beyond Expression. Men are born for Society

ciety, and design'd for mutual Helps and Comforts to each other. Strifes and Debates, Anger, Wrath, Bitterness are very pernicious and destructive, unnatural and irregular: they are the Disorders and Deviations of a deprav'd Nature from the Original Rule, beside the Primary Intent of the Kind Author of our Beings. Private Families cannot prosper, nor even subsist long, when torn asunder by Heats and Animosities: neither can a Kingdom stand when *divided against itself*, and crumbled into Sects and Parties. Even whole Nations, tho' united within themselves, if in a State of War with others, are *often* ruin'd thereby, and *always* lose much of that Prosperity and Plenty which they might otherwise Enjoy. This shows the Necessity of our living Friendly and Peaceably, whether consider'd as Private Men, or as Societies: our Temporal Safety and Happiness, our Being and Well-Being are bound up in it.

As to another Life, the Great Concern we have therein, and the apparent Necessity of the Means toward the desir'd end, oblige us yet more Strictly to live Peaceably and Friendly with one another. For, How shall any Sense or Face of Religion be kept up amongst us, unless we Agree and Unite in one Common Worship? How shall Decency, Order, and Regularity, be maintain'd without Peace and Unity? How shall Any have the Means of Instruction, or Improvement in Wisdom and Goodness, unless their Condition and Posture of Affairs give Freedom and Leisure for it; unless their Minds be calm and serene, their Thoughts easy and chearful, that is, unless they be at Peace with one another? Hatred and Revenge, Rancour and Malice eat out the very Vitals of Religion, estrange us mightily from God and Goodness, unqualify us for the Offices of Devotion and Piety, and render us very unfit for the Friendly and Peaceful Society of Heaven. I need not dwell long on so clear an Argument: every one that thinks must be sensible that to live Peaceably is as necessary as it is to Live and to be Happy, to be easy and satisfied in this Life, and to be for ever Blessed in Another. This may be sufficient to show our Obligation to the Duty of Peaceableness and the Foundation of it. The next Consideration is concerning it's Extent, which will be easily stated from the Principles laid down: And it is of great Importance to understand

stand it rightly for the Regulation of our Practice in many intricate Cases.

The Extent of our Obligation to this Duty may be considered under a Twofold Respect, Either

First, With respect to the Obligation it self abstractedly, viz. the End and Design of it. Or,

Secondly, With respect to our Power, Capacity, or Ability of discharging it.

For it can reach no farther in it self consider'd than the End and Design of it; nor with regard to us, than we are capable of performing it.

1. As to the Former, The great End and Design of all Laws which concern us, as I have before observed, is the present and future Happiness of Mankind. From Hence They derive their Obligation, and from Hence we must state their Measure. By the great Law of Charity founded hereupon, we are obliged to Love all Men, and to do them Good: This always holds, and no change of Circumstances whatever can make any Alteration in this general and highest Law. By the same Law of Charity we are likewise bound to *follow peace with all Men*; because this is loving them and doing them good, generally speaking, as has been shown. But yet in this, which is only a Secondary and subordinate Law, different Circumstances may cause some Variety, and make some Abatement. It can oblige no farther than the Reason of it holds, that is, no farther than it tends to the Glory of God, and the Good of Men. We may, nay we ought, at any time, to break Peace in Order to some greater Good; and so the same Law of Charity which binds to Peace generally, obliges to the Contrary in different Circumstances. If by disobliging and offending some Persons we can do them the greater Kindness; if we can reform and save them, or however can promote the publick Happiness by disturbing their present Peace more than by leaving them Quiet, Easy, and Unmolested; Then Considerations of Peace so far cease, as they are inconsistent with Piety and Charity. I chuse rather thus to state the Measure of our Obligation to Peace than to say, as is commonly said, that in all things Lawful we are to comply, or that we must
never

never Sin against God, for the sake of Peace. For tho' That be always a True, and generally a Safe Rule to go by; yet it is neither so Full, nor so Clear as it should be, nor does it go deep enough into the Case before us. *That we must not sin against God for the sake of Peace*, is no more than to say, that we must never sin on any Consideration whatsoever; which is very true, and the contrary would be absurd: But still, the great Question of all remains undecided, namely, when it is a Sin or no Sin, when Lawful or Unlawful, to offend against Peace: and this can only be determined in many Cases by considering which is the greater Good, or which the greater Charity, to leave Men Easy and Quiet, or to molest and disturb them in such particular Circumstances. To clear this by an Instance; It is a Precept of Scripture to *rebuke them that sin before all*, and yet we are commanded to *follow Peace with all Men*; which two Precepts may in some Cases seem to clash with each other. There may be Danger of committing a Sin either way, as Circumstances may happen: against the Precept of Peace, by Rebuking; against the other Precept, by not doing it. Here if we apply the Rule, that *we are not to Sin for the sake of Peace*; it is as true on the other hand, that *we are not to sin against Peace*: and so we are left in Uncertainty. But since the End of both Precepts is Charity; if we can know in such particular Circumstances which is the greater Good, or greater Charity, to do *this* or *that*, we may then determine what to do; and upon this Consideration seems to depend the whole Case, whether it be a Sin or a Duty to rebuke Offenders in such and such Instances. For if it be a greater Charity to do it than not, it bught to be done, and not else. Thus, separating and dividing from any particular Church is breaking the Church's Peace; yet if that Church be corrupted and unsound in it's Doctrines, it is Charity to Them, to Others, to our Selves, to *protest* against them first, and afterwards to break off from them. For it is for the Good of Mankind Here and Hereafter, that Truth be defended against Error; Purity of Faith and Worship against Corruptions; True and Undeild Religion against Idolatry and Superstition. So again, if Common Swearers, Drunkards, Atheists and Libertines go on Quietly and Undisturbedly in their Vices, it is breaking the Peace with them to rebuke, censure, or chastise them. Yet
this,

this, if done as it should be, is kind to them, to us, to all; and, tho' a breach of Peace, is no breach of Charity. Hence a Magistrate in the Execution of Justice, or a Minister in the Discharge of his Function must venture to disoblige any Man, or any Body of Men, whatsoever be the Consequence of it: because it cannot be so bad as that of Suffering Men to go on uncontrol'd in their Wickedness, and to sleep securely in their Vices. The Apostles of our Lord did by their Preaching occasion many Tumults and Disturbances, and were censured as Acts 17. 6. Men that had *turned the World upside down*, by reason of the Riots and Confusions which were every where rais'd upon their coming: yet what they did was for the everlasting Benefit of Mankind, and therefore of far greater Moment than a short and false Peace. If they had resolved to offend no body, but to have liv'd peaceably and quietly in a strict Sense, Paganism and Idolatry had remain'd still, and Christianity had made small progress in the World. But this would have been valuing Peace against the very End and Design of it; and betraying the Cause of Christ to the ruin of their own and other Men's Souls. Our Blessed Saviour, the *Prince of Peace*, had forewarn'd them of This long before. *Think not, says He, that I come to send Peace on Earth: I came not to send Peace, but a Sword. For I am come to set a Man at Variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother, and the Daughter in Law against her Mother in Law; and a Man's Foes shall be they of his own Household.* This was no Fault of his Religion, which was as well Peaceable as Pure; But of the Men of the World, who through Pride and Envy, and other Lusts made the worst Use of the kindest and best Designs. Our Blessed Lord himself had many Contests and warm Disputes with the Scribes and Pharisees, which He might easily have avoided, if his Concern for God's Honour, and for the Good of Men had not obliged Him to engage in them. It is manifest therefore that we ought not, and in Reason cannot seek Peace any otherwise, than in regard, and in Subordination to the general End and Design of it, the Glory of God, and the Happiness, present and future, of Mankind. So much for the Extent of the Obligation to the Duty of Peaceableness with respect to the End and Design of it.

2. We may consider it with respect to our Ability, Power or Capacity, Natural and Moral, of discharging it. So far as is *possible*, and so far as *lieth in us*.

That it is *sometimes possible to live peaceably with all Men*, I think the words of the Text plainly suppose; as also, that it is not so *always*. It is possible for a Man of a sweet Temper and prudent Conduct, in a private Station, having few Concerns in the World, to have the Love and good Word of All that know Him, and to live many Years without so much as a Controversy or Difference with Any. But this is the Case perhaps of very few, and the Instances of it are but seldom; and when they are, are hardly seen or observed. Generally speaking, it is not possible for any Man, at all Times, and in all Circumstances to *live peaceably with all Men*.

The Wisest and Best of Men have their Failings and Imperfections. They cannot manage so nicely and equally, at all times, as never to speak a foolish Word, or never to do a foolish Thing. Troubles and Afflictions will sometimes Sow'r their Tempers: Passions will break out and disturb their Reason: and some degree of Partiality arising from Self-Love will cloud their Understandings. A sudden Heat will transport them; an unexpected Accident surprize them. Or, if no such Case happens, yet Doubts and Perplexities will arise in Matters of Difficulty, and mingle with their Wisest and Coolest Reasonings. Hence, unless their Prudence be very Extraordinary, and their Caution more than Humane, some Mistake will creep in, some Offence be committed, a Quarrel ensue, and for some time at least they'll not *live peaceably with all Men*. Into some such Principle as This we must resolve the warm Debates, eager Disputes, and at length open Breaches between very Wise and Good Men; as between St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and some others. Such Instances are not to be drawn into Example, but they may serve to very good Use when applied to the purposes of Humility. They may show us what we are at best, and may awaken our Caution, considering what Infirmities we carry about with us; and that neither the Dearest of Friends, nor the

Best of Men can be infallibly secure of their own Temper and Conduct, but may transgress sometimes, either giving or taking needless Offence, and falling out with each Other.

But were this the worst of the Case, or had good Men none to deal with but such as themselves, They might, and would, for the most part, live very peaceably; Their Differences would be few, and those soon ended and amicably compos'd. But they are obliged to live in a wicked World, which will industriously labour to molest and grieve them: and, notwithstanding their best Endeavours to be Kind and Friendly, will find, or make some Occasion of Quarrel with them. The Humors and Follies of Mankind are so many and various, their Capacities so different, and their Opinions and Taste of Things so unlike, and even contrary to each other; that it is often impossible in the Nature of the thing to please all, or not to offend some, however accurate and careful we be in our Conduct. What Fence can there be against the Ignorance and Stupidity of one who cannot, or against the Prejudice and Perverseness of another, who will not understand the Good-will we bear Him; nor distinguish between Love and Hatred, between Good and Evil? How shall a Man guard against the Misconstructions of Envy; the ill Effects of the Spleen; the Designs of Ambition and Self-Interest; or the Extravagances of Pride? How shall He escape, if one shall injure Him out of Covetousness; and because He has injur'd Him, hate Him, and take all Occasions of destroying Him? How shall He be at Peace, if some be angry with Him for being Richer, others for being Wiser, and others for being better than Themselves? Or, to name no more, How shall He steer between two contending Parties, where He can neither be Neuter, nor comply with either without offending One or Both? I mention not the Cursed Practices of Incendiaries, who, out of set Purpose and Design, study to set Men at Variance by Whispers and Rumours, by Insinuations and Forgeries, by aggravating Circumstances that are, and feigning those that are not. These, and many other Considerations, may hinder

hinder the Wisest and Coolest of Men from living peaceably with all Men.

Add to this, what has been before hinted, that if it were possible, in the Nature of the Thing, by yeilding and complying to please all Men; yet we cannot in Reason and Conscience, as Men, or as Christians, comply any farther than is Reasonable, Equitable and Pious. If therefore any will be so unjust (and many such there will be) as to refuse to be on any Terms of Peace with us, unless we violate our Consciences and sin against God; if they expect to be Applauded and Encouraged in their fond Humours and Passions; to be caress'd in their Vices, gratified in their Lusts and Vanities, and to be sooth'd and flatter'd to their own Destruction; if they will not be Friends with us unless we say as they say, and do as they do, and come into their Schemes, however Unjustifiable and Unreasonable, Wicked or Impious; if these or such like Conditions and Articles of Peace be impos'd, and rigorously exacted of us, How shall we contrive to live peaceably with all Men? And yet He must have been very happy indeed in his Company, who has not often met with such Cases, or does not meet with them almost every day, if he be one of much Business, and of a large and general Acquaintance. From all which it appears, how Impossible it is, even for the Best of Men, at all Times, and in all Circumstances to *live peaceably with all Men*. Yet notwithstanding we are to use our sincere Endeavours to do what we can; and no Pretence whatever can Excuse us from doing *as much as lieth in us*, towards *living peaceably with all Men*. What this is I am now to consider under my Second general Head, which is

II. To show the particular Duties and Offices implied in the Duty of Peaceableness, and therein lay down Rules and Directions for a Peaceable Conduct.

The Duty of living Peaceably is of so Large and Comprehensive a Nature, and implies so many Particulars, that it were endless almost to enter into the Detail of them. They may be referr'd to two General Heads, the First relating to the inward Temper, the Second to the outward Carriage.

1. As to the Inward Temper of Mind, Two Things are requisite. One, that a Man be free from Unruly Appetites, Lusts and Passions; the Other, that He be endow'd with a large and diffusive Charity, having a tender Concern for the present and future Welfare of Mankind.

1st. The Peaceable Man must in the First place be free from the Dominion of Unruly Appetites, Lusts and Passions. He must Suppress Envy, Curb the Excesses of Self-Love, and above all Things labour to mortify and bring down his Pride. Every Lust, Passion, or inordinate Affection tends to create Discord, and to sow Dissention.

From whence come Wars and Fightings amongst you, saith St. James: come they not hence, even of your Lusts? From Lust of Pleasure, which is Sensuality; from Lust of Riches, which is Covetousness; from Lust of Power and Greatness, which is Ambition or Pride, the

Strongest and most Contentious of any. By Prov. 13, 10. *Pride only*, says the Wise-Man, *cometh Contention*; meaning Chiefly or Principally. It is the Pride of the Heart which commonly begins and carries on a Quarrel, and blows it up to the height: not but that Envy, Malice, Hatred, and other vile Affections have a hand in most Differences; but Pride goes along with All, and helps to inflame them. This is that Root of Bitterness which lies deep in our Nature, which seems in a manner to be born and bred up with us; which, like Poyson, spreads it self through Men of all Ranks and Orders; which, of all other Vices and Follies, is the greatest, and commonest; and of which every one almost, more or less, has a Share. It is One of the First Things that we take up, and the Last which we lay aside. Easy it is to be infected with it, hard to discover it, and yet harder to cure it. Special care therefore must be taken to find out this lurking Viper in our Bosoms, and to cast it far from us. There can be no Peace where This reigns. There will be Strife, Bitterness and perpetual Feuds, where-ever Persons of proud and haughty Spirits meet. The Peaceable Man then must have a Mind clear of all Lusts and inordinate Affections; but

but especially of Pride, *the Devil's Sin*, which made War in *Heaven*, and do's the like on *Earth*, and will for-ever foment the Discord, and fill up the Misery of *Hell*.

2. Besides this Negative Disposition in Order to Peace, a Man must farther be endow'd with a large Diffusive Charity, having a tender Love and Concern for Mankind. This will both incline Him to Peaceableness, and also fix it's due Bounds and Measures, as before hinted. This will prevent his Engaging as a Party in any Contests, excepting only such as are for the Glory of God, and the Good of Men. One of this Principle will have no Quarrel with Men, but with their Vices, no Hatred to Them but to their Faults. He will never commence a Difference, but with Reluctance; nor carry it on, but with Justice; nor let it end but in Charity. He will not lengthen it beyond what is reasonable and necessary; nor push Matters to Extremities, but rather drop the Contest than exceed in it. He will first consider, what Good may be done by it, and next by what fair Methods it may most easily and speedily be attain'd. In fine, a Lover of Mankind will be Meek and Gentle, Courteous and Affable, Just, Humble, and Merciful, which are all amiable Qualities, and make for Peace; contributing to the Beginning, the Growth and the Perfection of it. Having thus briefly consider'd what is implied in a Peaceable Temper, I come next to show,

2. Wherein consists a Peaceable Carriage. This is the Superstructure, whereof the Other is the Foundation. If *That* be well laid, *This* will easily be built upon it, and requires only Prudence to compleat it. It consists of many Particulars, as well as the Former, which may, I think, be reduced to these Three Heads.

1. That we give no needless Offence.
2. That we take None.
3. That, when any has been either given, or taken, we put a Stop to it as soon as may be. The Two first are necessary for the preventing of Differences: The Last for Composing them: which tho' it be needful, only upon some

some Failure in the Former, yet will be needful enough, and what we shall frequently have Occasion for.

1. I say, The Man of a Peaceable Carriage must be Cautious not to *give Offence* when needless, or, when it may Innocently be spar'd. This implies that He be careful to injure no Man's Person by unjust Violence; nor his Reputation by Reviling or Slander; nor his outward Condition and Circumstances by Deceit, Fraud, or Circumvention. And this is the Lowest, tho' not the smallest Part of a Peaceable Man's Character. Farther, all Arrogance, Rudeness and Boasting are hereby condemn'd as Enemies to Peace. To which Head may be referr'd the being too assuming, and forward in giving Opinion or Advice, intruding into things above Him, or that do not belong to Him, and being too hasty in Reproofs, or too severe, at improper Times, or to improper Persons. To this we may add, that He should use great Compliance and Condescension in all Matters indifferent, readily agreeing to every Innocent Usage, Custom, Fashion, or Ceremony of the Age, or the Place He lives in: not affecting to be wiser in little things than Others his Contemporaries, or those before Him; nor to distinguish Himself by Singularities of Behaviour, or other Niceties of small Consideration. In a Word, in all Matters of Liberty He ought to yield and comply, avoiding the Extremes of Moroseness, Rigour, and Severity. If a Superior, not to strain Authority too high, not to carry it too far, nor to chuse to effect by Threats and Menaces what may better be compass'd by milder and gentler Methods. If an Inferior, not to insist on every Nicety of Privilege, nor rudely to reflect on, and censure Authority; not to dispute any Point beyond what is just, decent, and modest, nor to be too severe in exposing the Failings, and prying into the real or imaginary Mistakes of his Governours. If an Equal, not to affect a Superiority in Place, nor to be too critically exact in weighing his own Pretences and Merits: but to be Complaisant and Yeilding in Matters of Ceremony and Respect, in Honour preferring others before Him; and
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in any doubtful Case, rather receding from what might strictly be his Right, than insisting so far upon it as to Endanger his Charity. These and the like Measures of Conduct are very requisite, if we would live so as to give no Offence to any.

2. Another Part of the peaceable Man's Character is, not to *take Offence*; especially in small Matters, which are hardly worth a Wise Man's Notice. This perhaps is a harder Task, than the Former. Many are Cautious enough as to the Matter of *giving* an Affront, who yet know not how to *take* One: The Reason of which seems to be this, that Civil or Gentle Carriage, or a Carefulness to offend no Man is Creditable and Reputable, and many would use it for that single Reason; but to pass by an Offence, or to bear an Injury however Slight and Trivial, according to the foolish Maxims of the World is thought a Disparagement; and so bears hard upon any Man who has not a very good Sense of Things, or has not conquer'd his Pride: And hence perhaps it is, that many who would not willingly be the first Occasion of a Quarrel, yet come easily into One upon a slight Provocation. This is certainly a great Fault, and what should carefully be avoided by Him that would *live peaceably with all Men*. We are to bear one another's Infirmities, and to pass by each other's Failings. There can be no Peace without this in such a World as ours is. The Case is plainly thus; The Generality of Mankind will never be wise enough, nor good enough to carry on an Innocent, Inoffensive, and Unblameable Conversation. Some Flaw or other in their Humour, and Conduct will discover it self frequently, which a good Man will pass over, thinking it a greater Fault to resent such Matters than to offend by them. Some will be Foolish and Inconsiderate in Discourse, Rash and Bold in their Censures, Rude and Unmannerly in their Reflections; Others will be as disobliging in Behaviour, not paying the Respect which is justly due, nor observing a Decency, or any Rules of *Decorum*. These and a Thousand other such petty Affronts and Injuries a Man must expect to meet with, who *Converses much in*
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the World. And what should He do in such Cases? Would it not be a vain and foolish Thing to resent such Trifles? Can there be any End of Differences if this be done? Is it not much better to pity and pardon all such slight and trivial Provocations? Can all Men be Wise? Will ever all Men be Good? Should not we make Allowances for Education, for Temper, for Custom, for Frailty? Have we not all our Passions and Infirmities, our Humours, our Follies, which cannot perfectly be cured? We may as soon alter some Men's Complexions and Features, as make them change their Humour or Manner. And perhaps some thing there is in most Men particular to them, which they are tenacious of; and they have as much Right to be so, as Others have to censure them for it. In these and the like Cases we are to remember the Apostle's Rule, *to bear the Infirmities of the Weak*; And tho' they are neither so Wise, nor even so Good as they should be, yet to have Patience with them, and not to make them worse by indiscreet and rigorous Proceedings. If any are too Eager and Passionate, give them Time to cool, and consider farther: if they are stiff and untractable, wait till they may soften, and become more pliable: If they are prejudiced and prepossess'd, have Patience with them till their Understandings may clear up, and Years may wear out their Prejudices: Instruction and gentle Usage may help towards it, when Opposition and Severity would but rivet them the Closer, and harden them the more in them. Let not any Man be offended at a few foolish Words, or a disrespectful Look or Gesture. A Lover of Peace will have so much good Nature as to impute them rather to the Indiscretion than Ill-will of the Offender; and so much Charity as to forgive such slight Trespasses, tho' really design'd and proceeding from some Grudge and Hatred. Nay tho' reproach'd and revil'd in some grievous Manner, He will pity the Offender, despise the Malice, and return Good for Evil; As a kind Physician, when He finds his Patient disorder'd and raving, is not angry with Him, but pities Him the more, and takes the more Pains to Heal Him. There is nothing
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in this Procedure but what is Just, Equitable, and Christian. If all Men cannot be Wise, let those that can, be so both for Themselves and Others, and supply Their want of Good Nature and Prudence by the abundance of their own. Most Quarrels might be prevented by a discreet Management on either Side; as the sending of a Challenge would make no Duel, were there none to accept. There are few People so untractable but may be kept in Temper by a wise Management. Sometimes their Passions may be suffer'd to spend themselves; and then it is only waiting a while, and They are calm. At other Times a soft Answer may pacify them, or a Smile divert them, or a seeming Compliance, or some obliging Courtesy disarm them. Thus the Sallies of Ill-Nature or Peevishness, like some jarring Notes, may, by a skilful Hand, be so artfully set and plaid as not to hinder the Harmony of Society, but sometimes to make it even the Sweeter. If any ask how far we ought to carry our Compliance, and what sorts of Affronts or Injuries, or how many, we should thus bear with; The Answer may be understood from the Measures laid down above. We are to consider in those Cases whether we can do more Good to the World, or more Honour to God by resenting and taking Notice of any Injury, than by passing it by: and upon This we are to determine what to do. And if we lay aside Prejudice and Passion, and listen to our Reason only, it will not be difficult to know how we ought to steer in Cases of this Nature. We are to remember that such Reasons as these, *We are Injur'd, we are Provok'd, or, the Man deserves to be punish'd*, and the like are no sufficient Reasons of Resentment to Wise or Good Men. But if they can do more Good by resenting the Offence, and punishing the Offender than otherwise, Then they not only may, but ought to do it. And so much for the second Rule of Peaceable Conduct in order to prevent needless Quarrels.

3. The Third is in order to compose them: That if any needless Offence has been either given or taken, that we endeavour to put a Stop to it as soon as may be. If

a Difference is already begun stifle it in the Birth, and suffer it not to proceed farther. This implies a willingness and readiness to acknowledge and confess any Mistake committed by Chance, by Indiscretion, by Passion, or Frailty; to ask Pardon for it, and to offer any reasonable Satisfaction in order to Reconciliation. A peaceable Man in this Case will not think it below him to own his Fault, tho' it be to an Equal or to an Inferior, nor to make the first step toward Reconciliation. He will rather exceed than come short in his Reparation for it, and will chuse with *Zaccheus* rather to restore fourfold for any Injury done, than to continue it or defend it. There are some Proud and Haughty Spirits who will never own themselves to have committed a Fault, but are sure to make the Thing much worse by pretending to justify it. What was at first perhaps but an Indiscretion is hereby made their Crime: and they are much more unjust in defending what they have done, than at first in doing it. The Foundation of all this is Pride and Folly; and it is hard to say whether such Conduct be more Injurious or more Foolish, or whether it makes a Man more hated or despised. Be it which it will, a Lover of Peace will abhor such Practices, and will neither be afraid nor asham'd to own that He has done amiss, and to ask Pardon for it. This is a Point of good Breeding and Civility, as well as of Justice and Charity. And considering our sundry Failings and Infirmities, and how *in many things*, in this Sense also, *we offend all*, it is so necessary a Point of Christian and peaceable Conduct, that there could be no easy and quiet Living in the World without it. Having thus shown in the general, what we may and ought to do in order to *live peaceably with all Men*, give me leave now only in the

III. Third and last Place, To apply the General Rules to some special Cases and Instances, particularly to what the present Occasion offers to us. Our Differences with one another are commonly of Three Sorts; Religious, Political, and Personal. The First about Religion, the Second about Matters of State, the Third about *Meum* and *Tuum*, or some Rights and Privileges between Man and Man.

I. As to Religious Differences, they are generally the fiercest, and last the longest, and are of fatal Consequence to Peace and Happiness: and therefore certainly ought as much as in us lies to be prevented or compos'd by us. I will not take upon me to say what our Governors in Church or State might, or should, do in order to it: They have done a great deal, and They may perhaps do more, when Affairs are more settled, and Men's Passions cool, and Times more favourable for it. What concerns us as private Men is, so to defend our Religion, and to maintain the true Faith and Worship, by Discourse or Writing, as not to lose our Charity. Religion is a Cause that deserves our Zeal; and if many will be offended with us for telling them the Truth, and not complying with such Errors as would lead both to their and our Destruction, the Fault is their own: we would still *as much as lieth in us live peaceably* with them. Not by betraying the Cause of Christ, not by ceasing to *contend earnestly for the Faith, which was once deliver'd to the Saints*, not by pleading for Amendments and Alterations in the purest and best constituted Church of Any in the World; but by condescending to hearken to and answer any modest Scruples, by Meekness and Gentleness, by Patience and Forbearance, *not rendring Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing*. This is as much as in us lies as private Persons, towards living peaceably with them that dissent from us. Something more lies in *them*, who have no unlawful Terms of Communion impos'd, and therefore might and should give up their Prejudices, and submit to lawful Authority, and wholesome Order for the Church's Peace, However, considering the prevailing Biass, which Education, Custom, and Prejudice lay upon weak Minds, especially when they have neither Leisure nor Capacity to know better; and considering that mild and gentle Usage, may possibly win some over, whom Reviling and Rudeness would but harden and render worse; it is certainly a Christian Duty not to upbraid and provoke Them, not to be bitter against Them, but rather to wait with Patience till God may open their Eyes, or turn their Hearts: to whose

Mercy we should therefore leave them, and in the mean while take care of our own Souls. But,

2. Another sort of Differences, near as fatal as the Former, and in some respects more so, are those among our Selves, of the same Church and Interest, our *Party-Differences*. How have these sower'd Men's Tempers, enflam'd their Passions, and almost eaten out the Heart of Christian Charity! I have not Time, nor Words to lament the visible Decay of Religion and Piety owing to those Heats and Animosities so rise amongst us: The whole Nation feels it, and every good Man mourns in secret for it. We shall not I am afraid, find that these eager Contests are founded either in a true Love for our own Country, in particular, or for Mankind in general; or that our Zeal arises from a real Concern for Truth, for Justice, or for Charity. What Truth is there in applauding or condemning at all Adventures as well Persons as Things, as they are for or against one Side? What Justice in reviling and abusing one another with odious Distinctions, and drawing peaceable Men into one side or other, even against their Wills, and then fixing a black Character upon them? What Charity in hating and reviling great Numbers before we know them; making all Merit, in a manner, consist in I know not what Names, confounding the Distinctions of Praise and Dispraise, Virtue and Vice, Good and Evil? but I shall urge this no farther, considering how tender a Point I am now upon, and that tho' it most of all deserves censure, yet perhaps can least bear it. I shall but just offer a hint or two to well-dispos'd Persons in Relation to their Conduct, that they may not foment or increase those Differences which they cannot cure. The best way certainly for private Men, is to be as little concern'd in those Disputes as may be; to leave the Government, and the Affairs of it quietly and contentedly in the Hands wherein God has placed them; to be Modest and Candid in their Censures of, Submissive and Courteous in their Carriage to all without Distinction: to let angry Men enjoy their own Opinions; and instead of employing their Time and Thoughts about Matters, which tend only to stir up their Passions, and cannot profit them,

them, to mind their own Business: and above all to mind *the one thing needful*, which is so seldom thought of amidst all our Heats and Contests, if not about Trifles, yet Trifles in Comparison. While we are engaging with such Warmth and Eagerness about the Affairs of this Life, it might abate our Fervor to consider how little a Time we have to sojourn here, and how great a Work we have upon our Hands; and of what Moment it is to go cool and quiet hence; if ever we hope to find a Place within the Calm and Peaceful Mansions of the Blessed.

3. and Lastly, A word or two about private Differences between Man and Man, and then I shall have done. These are many and various, and would be of dangerous Consequence to the Publick, were it not that under a wise and good Government, when Gentler Methods fail, They may at length be Judicially and Authoritatively determin'd. This is the best Humane means to keep a wicked World in Order: It secures in a great Measure the outward Peace of Society, and makes some amends for the want of Universal Justice and Charity. Were the Rules before given. Universally received and practis'd, there would be less Occasion for Judicial Proceedings; but since this is a Happiness not to be expected on this side Heaven, and that as the World is now, there could be no comfortable living without Courts of Justice, we may be highly thankful, that in a Case of so great Necessity, we have so good a Remedy. A peaceable Man however will yet be tender of having Recourse to a Method, that is design'd only as a Reserve for the last Extremity. He will bear sometime, and suffer wrong; pass by little Trespases, and over-look some Injuries; rather than bring Trouble and Expence upon, and occasion Ill-Blood amongst his Neighbours. Small Damages may be sustain'd, and even greater Losses may be repair'd, but it is hard ever to repair a Breach of Charity. He will therefore, tho' the Cause be weighty and considerable, try all gentle Methods first to win over an Adversary; and if Matters can thus be Amicably adjusted, and the Point secur'd, he obtains his Right and keeps a Friend at the same time, and neither endangers his own, nor ano-

ther's Charity. If after all, the fairest offers of accommodation be rejected; and He must submit to a smaller Evil to prevent a greater: He will still remember to proceed as becomes a Man, and a Christian: with no Hatred and Revenge towards his Adversary; with no Railing and Bitterness, but with an upright Intention; and a calm and sedate Temper of Mind. He will use none but fair and just Methods; will suborn no Witnesses; nor attempt to practise upon Juries; will not disguise the real Truth, nor act against it; will seek Justice only, and abide by it. And when at length his Cause shall be decided by a competent Authority, tho' it should happen to be against him, He will patiently and readily submit to it, and not take upon him to censure the Proceedings of the Court, or to be Wiser than his Judges. Or if Sentence shall be given in favour of him, He will not insult or triumph over his Adversary, but be willing and ready ever after to do him any good Offices, and to live in entire Peace and Friendship with him. With these Cautions, and with this temper, *Christians* may go to Law with *Christians* and be blameless. Yet I must observe, that however one of the contending Parties may be of this Temper, yet it rarely, or perhaps, never happens that both are so. For if neither desire any thing but what is Fair and Honest; if they are both willing to comply with any peaceable Measures, and are in perfect Charity with each other; it is hard to imagine how any Quarrel can arise, between them, or however proceed so far as to a Judicial Hearing. There seems to be but one Case where this can happen: and that is, when the Matter of Controversy is very intricate and perplexed, and the Reasons seemingly equal on both Sides. Here both may amicably consent to refer the Matter to a *Legal Tryal*, and so finally determine it. And yet even in this Case, there is another more friendly and less expensive way, which may do as well; and that is taking private Counsel of Men learned in the Law, and submitting to an *Arbitration*; but enough of this.

Having thus briefly endeavoured to lay down the Rules and Measures of a Peaceable Conduct both General and
Special;

Special; I shall now close all with a Consideration or two, to induce us to the Observance of them. We are Born into a World, when there's no such Thing as Joy, Comfort or Security, but in Peace and Unity. Histories of Times past may inform us, Reason may perswade us, or Experience convince us, that Divisions are always destructive and pernicious, are the Presages and Causes of approaching Ruin; and however some may take delight in them for a time, who were the first Authors of them, yet at length they fall heavy on their own Heads, and are fatal to themselves. None are Gainers hereby at last, but the common Enemy of Mankind; whose business it is to set us at Variance with each other, that he may the sooner, and the more effectually destroy all. Consider farther, that we are sent into this Life in order to a better, and are here only in a State of Tryal and Probation. While we are striving and contending with each other about Trifles, the great Business of Religion is almost at a Stand, and nothing in a Manner done to prepare for Eternity. Life is short, Time wears away, and Death approaches, and all our great Matters are to come hereafter. A few Years must end our petty Differences: we must sleep in the Dust together, and within a while awake to Judgment. Then what profit shall we find in all those vain Janglings and Contentions with each other: Begun in Folly, nursed up by Pride, and at length ending in Misery, Eternal Misery? May these and the like Considerations serve to moderate our Heats, and teach us to *put away from us all Bitterness and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking, with all Malice, to be Kind one to another, Tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as we hope that God for Christ's sake may forgive us.*

Special: I shall now close all with a few words
to induce us to the observance of them. I shall begin
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progressing Ruin; and however some may take delight in
them for a time, who were the first Authors of them, yet
at length they fall heavy on their own Heads, and are as
ill as themselves. Those are Gainers hereby at last, but
the common Enemy of Mankind; whose business it is to
set us at Variance with each other, that he may the sooner
and the more effectually destroy all. Consider further,
that we are sent into this life in order to a better, and are
here only in a state of Trial and Probation. While we
are living and contending with each other about Trifles,
the great Business of Religion is almost at a stand, and
nothing in a Manner done to prepare for Eternity. Life
is short, Time wears away, and Death approaches, and all
our great Matters are to come hereafter. A few Years more
and our petty Differences: we must sleep in the Dust to-
gether, and within a while awake to Judgment. Then
what profit shall we find in all those vain struggles and
Contentions with each other? Begin in folly, finish up
by pride, and at length ending in misery Eternal misery?
Miserable and like Considerations lead to moderate
our Heats, and teach us to put away from us all bitterness,
and wrath, and angry, and Clamour, and Reviling,
and all things, to be kind one to another, Tender-hearted,
forgiving one another as we hope that God will forgive us.